been initiated for making payment to the depositors and investors in accordance with the notified scheme.

**Official Going Abroad**

1776. DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA:

SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Government OfficaLs of the rank of JS and above who have been allowed to go abroad on official tours during the past three years, with their names and designation, year-wise;

(b) the sanctioning authority and the limit of foreign exchange incurred on each of them;

(c) the object/purpose behind such tours; and

(d) whether the financial burden on Government is increasing in terms of foreign exchange by such tours?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (d) Relevant information being not centrally available, it is being collected from all the Ministeries and Departments. This will be laid on the table of the House as early as possible.

**Suggestion for Reduction of Sales Tax by NIPF**

1777. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Institute of Public Finance has in its report suggested reduction of Central sales tax;

(b) if so, what are the other recommendations made in the report; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR): (a) and (b) Following are the important recommendations made by NIPF in its report on 'Reform of Inter-State Sales Taxation in India':

(i) The maximum rate of CST may be reduced to 3% *w.e.f.* April, 2001 to 1% from the beginning of 2003 (with rebate on input tax paid) and to zero per cent thereafter (with full set off for input tax paid);